DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 571 CS 215 652

AUTHOR Nahrwold, Cindy; Quaintance, J.
TITLE Shifting Capital: Electronic Publishing on Bourdieu's Linguistic Market.
PUB DATE Mar 96
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (47th, Milwaukee, WI, March 27-30, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Electronic Publishing; Higher Education; *Intellectual Disciplines; Media Research; Printed Materials; Publishing Industry; *Scholarly Journals; *Scholarship
IDENTIFIERS Bourdieu (Pierre); Online Reading; Theoretical Orientation

ABSTRACT

A study examined scholarly journals available exclusively online, those available exclusively in traditional paper form, and an emerging category blurring the boundaries between them. The analysis uses Pierre Bourdieu's theory of linguistic habitus, the marketplaces, and symbolic capital to understand the difference(s) between traditional and electronic publishing. According to Bourdieu, certain discourses have more or less value in different marketplaces, and local marketplaces can be in competition with other local marketplaces for value on the larger global market. Examined were "College Composition and Communication" (CCC) representing the traditional field, the online journal "Postmodern Culture" (PMC) representing the new field, and "The PreText Conversation: REINVW" representing the intermediate field. Results indicated that, of the 3, the forum between print-bound and electronic publications is the most challenging to the value system of the global market, the field of large-scale production that is the academy. Findings suggest that, unlike the other two which are very much the same in that the local marketplace of electronic publishing appears to mirror traditional print-bound publishing, the REINVW problematizes, and performs, through its cyclical dialogue, the theories of "writing as process," and social construction of knowledge that inform current pedagogical practices--theories that print-bound documents hide. Findings identify the constraints imposed by the linguistic habitus of traditional paper publishing--constraints on authorship, intellectual property rights, copyrights, topic appropriateness, and tone--that affect the value of electronic publishing on the global disciplinary market. (Contains 12 references.) (Author/CR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 403 571

1996 Conference on College Composition and Communication

Shifting Capital: Electronic Publishing on Bourdieu's Linguistic Market

Cindy Nahrwold and J. Quaintance, New Mexico State University

Abstract

This presentation examines journals available exclusively online, those available exclusively in traditional paper form, and an emerging category blurring the boundaries between the two. Our analysis uses Pierre Bourdieu's theory of linguistic habitus, the marketplaces, and symbolic capital to understand the difference(s) between traditional and electronic publishing. Bourdieu tells us that certain discourses have more or less value in different marketplaces, and that local marketplaces can be in competition with other local marketplaces for value on the larger global market. We argue that online and traditional printed forums for academic publishing are best understood as separate local marketplaces – each with its own hierarchy of constraints – in competition on the global academic market. Our analysis identifies the constraints imposed by the linguistic habitus of traditional paper publishing – constraints on authorship, intellectual property rights, copyrights, topic appropriateness, and tone, for example – that affect the value of electronic publishing on the global, disciplinary market. This analysis helps us understand our disciplinary formation and could advance electronic publishing of scholarship as an academically/professionally viable alternative to traditional paper publishing.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. Nahrwold

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS215652

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Shifting Capital:
Electronic Publishing on Bourdieu's Linguistic Market

Cindy Nahrwold and J. Quaintance, New Mexico State University

The growth of on-line/electronic possibilities for publication -- such as Web pages, on-line real-time discussions, listserv discussions, and some forms that blur the boundaries between traditional print-bound publication and electronic publication -- raise questions about how we in the academy publish, what gets counted, how these issues are determined, and what the rewards will be. There are many differences between print and electronic documents, and the value of these documents in reference to each other and to the discipline need to be understood.

This presentation uses Pierre Bourdieu's economic theory of symbolic exchanges to describe the disciplinary formation of the academy and the difference(s) between print and electronic publishing. We look at a journal available exclusively in traditional paper form, one available exclusively on line, and an emerging category blurring the boundaries between the two. This last category, we argue, best illustrates the symbiotic relationship between theory and practice in the academy -- and the one that could advance electronic publishing of scholarship as an academically/professionally viable alternative to traditional paper publishing.

Bourdieu's Economic Theory

Bourdieu's theory of the symbolic value of language and the marketplace where this value is negotiated describes discourse in economic terms. Along with his notion of symbolic capital, this description is useful for two reasons. First, it is undeniable that the words of some scholars in a discipline have more power than those of others. This power affects the discipline by both setting the general direction the discourse will take and by determining the value of specific ideas, styles, and tone. Second, Bourdieu's economic terminology reminds us that cultural practices -- whether they be inside or outside of the academy -- cannot be detached from the material conditions of their existence. (From this point on, references to "the academy" are to be understood as referring to the humanities.)

Bourdieu points out that utterances have meaning and value only in

> the relationship that the speakers establish, consciously or unconsciously, between the linguistic product offered by a socially characterized speaker, and the other products offered [by other socially characterized speakers] simultaneously in a determinate social space. (1991, p. 38)

Taking this "determinate social space" to be the academy, and specifically the academic space of humanities studies, we argue

that the value of electronic publications is established by individuals who, consciously or unconsciously, use traditional academic forms of linguistic exchange as the standard.

This is no less true of the reception of the utterance. It must be received in competition with other utterances by socially characterized hearers in a determinate social space. This space is a market for linguistic products that determines both the meaning and the symbolic value of the products.

Speakers in this "determinate social space" are expected to find "personal" styles that mark their discourse as their own. These styles, Bourdieu says, are then valued by "agents endowed with schemes of perception and appreciation that enable them to constitute [style] as a set of systematic differences" (1991, p. 39). The linguistic market determines the symbolic value of stylistic differences in utterances in relation to both the "common language" of all participants in the particular social space -- for our purposes here, the language of the humanities -- and the individually, stylistically marked utterances by those participants. This awareness of style as meaningful rather than simply formal can be seen in Voloshinov's (1929/1973) characterization of the linguistic sign as having both an internal dynamic (between form and meaning) and an external dynamic (between it and the people using it). The notion of style as contributing to meaning has also been noted by scholars such as McLuhan (1962, 1964), who claims that the "medium is the

message"; by Baudrillard (1988), who "describes the United States as the center of what he calls 'hyperreality', a condition where images, signs, and codes no longer represent reality but in effect constitute reality, becoming 'more real than real'" (Faigley, 1992, p. 164); by Harvey (1990), who sees one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism as being a concern with surface features; and by Lanham, who sees the "oscillation between looking AT the expressive surface and THROUGH it ... [as] the most powerful aesthetic attribute of electronic text" (1993, p. 43). So both content and form of individual utterances are valued against other utterances by the participants in a social space or field.

All utterances or linguistic exchanges are thus economic exchanges on the symbolic market as well. They take place between speakers (producers) possessing an internalized form of a "common language" (linguistic capital) and hearers (a market) -- and have at their center the relations of power between producers and the market. Certain producers can exercise more power over the market relative to other producers and reap higher rewards: they are published and cited more, and therefore determine the market to a greater extent than those with less capital. Individual utterances are thus signs of the linguistic wealth and authority of a speaker in relation to the space of their production (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66).

The other important thing to note from Bourdieu is his distinction between a field of "restricted cultural production" and a field of "large-scale production" (1993, p. 115). The products offered on the field of restricted production are intended primarily for other producers of the same type of products (i.e. experts) -- unlike the field of large-scale production where the products are offered primarily to the public at large. Nearly no one reads professional journals but professionals in the field served by the journal. Unlike a vegetarian cattle rancher, the producer in a restricted field of cultural production is also a consumer of the same types of products he or she produces.

Implications of Bourdieu's Theory

So what does this mean for us in the humanities? Until recently the traditional paper-bound forms of academic publication were all that we had -- the proverbial "one-horse town." Now we, as both producers and consumers, are able to manipulate electronic texts to a greater degree. As Lanham points out, "[e]lectronic typography is both creator-controlled and reader-controlled" (1993, p. 4). And Web browsers have loosened the constraints of print-bound, linear reading by encouraging readers to access electronic documents in nonlinear fashion (that is, readers can move readily from one linked document to others), thereby making them more adaptable to the

individual concerns of document consumers. Electronic documents are also more temporally defined as opposed to spatially determined: because they are not concrete entities, electronic documents can be defined only in terms of time (e.g., when posted, when accessed, when updated). Because access to networked computers has increased dramatically in the last 10 years, so has the reliance on network technologies such as MUDs (multi-user dungeons/dimensions/domains) and MOOs (MUD- or multi-object oriented), on-line discussions, listservs/newsgroups and other Internet forms. These forms are thus places where new market values are negotiated (i.e., for hearers to evaluate/place value on the utterances of speakers/producers).

Traditional print-bound journals are products of an older, established field of restricted production, whose structure of valuation is based on the material constraints of publishing as well as the traditional cultural values of the academy as a whole (seen here as a global market or field of large-scale production due to its necessary reliance on the public at large for funding). The emergent outlets for academic publication which are strictly on line belong to a separate field of restricted production, a field whose products are in competition for value with the traditional, print-bound field. Mediating this process of valuation is a third field of restricted production that incorporates the values of the other two markets/fields (but is really closer to and has more in common with the new than the

old). The struggle for value in the global market/field of large-scale production among the products of these three local markets/fields of restricted production displays itself in the surface features of the texts (largely determined by material constraints of textual production), the ideas expressed in the texts (largely determined by the values system of the global market/field of large-scale production), and the interaction between surface features and ideas.

Objects of Study

We have chosen College Composition and Communication (CCC) to represent the traditional field, the on-line journal Postmodern Culture (PMC) to represent the new field, and The PreText Conversation: REINVW to represent the third, intermediate field. The REINVW is a crossover in that the asynchronous discussion is conducted on line, combining aspects of a traditional review of a printed book or article and an interview with the author (and the text). Participants in the conversation can ask the author about the text, the author responds, the questions can be about the response or not -- very conversational and nonlinear, yet focused on a text that is print-bound.

CCC

Print-bound articles exemplify the texts found in CCC -- texts acknowledging the constraints imposed by the local

marketplace of traditional paper publishing: constraints on authorship, intellectual property rights, copyrights,[1] topic appropriateness, and tone, for example. Most of the articles are single-authored, reflecting the unwritten law in the humanities that says that single-authored works have more value for promotion and tenure than do co-authored/collaborative pieces. All of the articles in this journal carry the name of the author; and the page facing the "Contents" page in each issue carries the copyright symbol and the year of that copyright, held by NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English). On that same page is found a description of the kinds of topics deemed appropriate for the journal. Finally, articles published in CCC are relatively formal, which is expected in an academic periodical: the articles are linear, unified, and coherent; other authors are cited and their texts quoted; and the tone is relatively formal, as established by professional vocabulary, sophisticated sentence structure, and lengthy paragraphs/dense text.

PMC

The first page that a reader encounters in the on-line hypertext[2] journal PMC lists in chronological order all issues of the journal, including the current one. Using the mouse to click on a particular issue, the reader accesses a new page, which lists the contents of that particular issue: abstracts, articles, related readings, a column, book reviews, letters,

notices, general information (access and subscription, copyright, submission and author's guidelines), "comments," "search," and MOO icons, and a publishing announcement. Clicking on a particular article title pulls up that article, which is prefaced with the author's name and a copyright notice. Paragraphs in the article are numbered (there are no "pages" in hypertext), and endnote numbers are highlighted in blue (as are all other clickable items). This highlighting represents a hypertextual link; the reader can click on a particular endnote number, access that note, and then, after reading it, click on "Back" to return to the article -- in much the same way that a reader of a print-bound journal article interrupts her reading to flip to a note at the back of an article and then flips back to the text of the article to resume her reading. Between the text of the article and the endnotes, a "Comments -- Talk Back" icon appears; clicking on this icon pulls up a "Reader Response Form" which the reader can use to send comments about the article to the journal's editors.

In spite of the temporalization of space that occurs in hypertextual reading, on-line journals such as PMC are determined by many of the constraints of the local marketplace of traditional paper publishing. Most of the articles are still single-authored and prominantly display the name of that author, and although they are linked to other documents, for all intents and purposes they are autonomous in their structure and linear in

their argument. Additionally, these articles carry copyright notices, discuss topics of interest to academic readers, and publish only those reader "Comments" selected (and possibly edited) by the journal's editors. Finally, the tone of PMC articles mirrors that of the global academic market -- in the same way that academic journals such as CCC do.

The PreText Conversation: REINVW

Situated between the purely electronic PMC and the purely print-bound CCC is The PreText Conversation: REINVW, a focused discussion on the PreText electronic discussion list. Since it is text-based and not hypertext, the REINVW with Geoffrey Sirc and his PRE/TEXT 14.1-2 article "Writing Classroom as A & P Parking Lot" is fairly linear. But it is also informal and conversational: people take chances with what they say and are silly, creative, and spontaneous (e.g., "tricky enuf," "I can't imagine teaching a class in 1994 without Snoop Doggy Dogg," "Geoff, why don't we forget the questions?!"), far reaching from the original text at times and yet always cycling back to it for grounding (e.g., "Back to my question," "Geoff, I really dig this sentence...."). At the same time, however, the REINVW displays many of the characteristics of traditional, academic print-bound publishing: other authors are mentioned often (e.g., Lyotard, Bartholomae, Foucault, Nietzsche, Derrida) as are their texts (complete with quotation marks and page numbers) -- citing

cultural capital; the style is, at times, very professional (e.g., "The interview is a very important form, in terms of the register of the lexicon and the self-organizing form of the text"); and the participants clearly feel they have something at stake in the creation of knowledge (e.g., they "sign" their postings) -- authorizing the discourse. The asynchronous nature of the REINVW also allows participants to read and reflect on previous postings and to even revise their responses as they write them; these postings are therefore not merely "shot from the hip." Finally, the conversational nature of the REINVW allows participants to revise what they had "said" before, in light of what others have "said."

Conclusion

> *Whatever happens, however we rearrange our marketplace of ideas -- as sooner or later we certainly shall -- our sense of what "publication" means is bound to change. (Lanham, 1993, p. 22)*

Of the three, the forum that mediates between print-bound and electronic publications (the REINVW) is the most challenging to the value system of the global market/the field of large-scale production that is the academy. Unlike the other two -- CCC and PMC, which are very much the same in that the local marketplace of electronic publishing appears to mirror traditional print-

bound publishing -- the REINVW problematizes, asks us in the academy to question the validity of these two local marketplaces' constraints at a time when scholarship is increasingly being seen as collaborative inquiry. The REINVW also nicely performs, through its cyclical dialogue, the theories of "writing as process" and social construction of knowledge that inform current pedagogical practices -- theories that print-bound documents hide and so therefore, in a way, deny. Meaning in the REINVW is made collectively, the discussion moving conversationally from one participant to another, the utterances of all participants contributing to the meaning of the discourse.

In the REINVW, then, our professional practice reflects and enacts our pedagogical theory. If we want our theories to be valued on the global market -- both within and without the academy -- we need to practice them professionally, not only with ourselves but also with our students. We then can "introduce [them] to the scholarly conversation sooner than we do now, and in more realistic and effective ways" (Lanham, 1993, p. 22). Rather than bind electronic publishing with the same constraints that bind traditional paper-bound publishing, as happens in PMC, we should at the very least loosen them. In so doing, we will be able to realize the full potential of networked computer technology, thereby allowing electronic publishing to live up to its potential as both a valuable and valued academic/professional activity.

References

Baudrillard, J. (1988). America (C. Turner, Trans.). London: Verso.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). Language and symbolic power (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.; J. B. Thompson, Ed.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature (R. Johnson, Ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Faigley, L. (1992). Fragments of rationality: Postmodernity and the subject of composition. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Harvey, D. (1990). The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Lanham, R. (1993). The electronic word: Democracy, technology, and the arts. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McLuhan, M. (1962.) The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McLuhan, M. (1964). Understanding media: The extensions of man. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Postmodern Culture [On-line serial]. <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/pmc/contents.all.html>.

Sirc, G. (1993). "Writing classroom as A & P parking lot." PRE/TEXT, 14 (1-2), 27-70.

Sirc, G. (1994). "Writing classroom as A & P parking lot." The PreText conversation: REINVW [online]. <listserv@miamiu.acs.muohio.edu>.

Voloshinov, V. N. (1973). Marxism and the philosophy of language. (L. Matejka & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). New York: Seminar. (Original work published 1929).

Endnotes

[1]As Lanham points out, "the concept of copyright, the protection of a writing as the author's 'intellectual property'[,] ... is a creation of print" (1993, p. 18).

[2]"Hypertext is a nonlinear means of electronic expression in which the textual surface is given a third dimension by embedding further kinds of information beneath the surface. A changing symbol or typeface lets the reader know that a hypertext is concealed beneath that text. And of course there are texts behind those texts. The reader's path through such interreferentiality soon becomes totally nonlinear..." (Lanham, 1993, p. 94).